



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EST (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Thursday - February 20, 2003

- ***In the West***, rain and snow showers are developing from ***southern California to the southern Rockies***, further improving topsoil moisture reserves and high-elevation snow packs. However, long-term water supply concerns persist throughout the ***West*** due to the effects of multi-year drought, including below-normal reservoir levels, meager mountain snow packs, and poor spring and summer runoff prospects.
- ***On the Plains***, showers are overspreading ***southernmost portions of the region***, maintaining favorable soil moisture levels for winter wheat development. Wheat remains dormant on the ***northern and central Plains***, although recent mild weather has left the crop vulnerable to potential late-winter and spring cold outbreaks.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, mild weather (today's high temperatures are forecast to range from 40 to 55 degrees F) is melting recent snowfall and boosting soil moisture, but leaving muddy conditions in fields and feedlots.
- ***In the South***, rain showers are developing across the region, slowing fieldwork but improving soil moisture reserves in preparation for spring planting.

Outlook: A developing storm over the ***southern Rockies*** will bring rain and mountain snow to portions of the ***Southwest, southern Plains, and Delta***. During the weekend, locally heavy rain and the threat of flooding will spread into the ***Southeast and Mid-Atlantic region*** as the storm tracks into the ***Tennessee Valley***. Elsewhere, rain and snow showers will accompany a weak low-pressure system in the ***Pacific Northwest and northern Rockies***, while scattered snow showers will fall along a slow-moving cold front in the ***upper Midwest***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for February 25 - March 1 calls for above-normal precipitation across the ***South*** and in the ***southern Rockies***, while drier-than-normal conditions will prevail in the ***upper Midwest***. Below-normal temperatures are expected from the ***Rockies westward to the Pacific Coast***, while warmer-than-normal weather will prevail in ***Florida***.

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